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STATE FOR INR/R/MR, I/GWHA, WHA, WHA/PDA, WHA/BSC, WHA/EPSC, CDR USSOCOM FOR J-2 IAD/LAMA

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [AR](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: COMMENTARY CONTINUES FOLLOWING STATE OF THE
UNION ADDRESS; 1/30-2/1/10; BUENOS AIRES

SUMMARY

¶1. Over the weekend, only two Argentine dailies, largest daily Clar???n and left-leaning, pro-government P????gina 12, printed opinion articles written by Argentine reporters on President Obama's foreign policy following the State of the Union address. All other dailies published articles from international news agencies. Clar???n's opinion articles were positive, praising the President's speech and change of direction, but fearful Congress may stop his progress. On the other hand, P????gina 12's opinion articles were critical, citing the President's lack of attention towards foreign policy and his inability to understand what the public wants from him. End summary.

¶2. Clar???n published (1/31) an opinion article by Gustavo Sierra praising the President's "brilliant speech" and naming the President as "one of the best speakers in U.S. history." However, Sierra is critical of the Democratic response to Massachusetts Senate defeat, claiming that Democrats now have pushed to the side "sacred initiatives such as health care reform" and adopted a "defeatist attitude." Sierra appears to disagree with this strategy, stating that while the Republicans have not had 60 Senate seats since 1909, the Democrats have had 60 seats at ten times, but each time they give up their majority due to momentum from the Republicans. Thus, the Democrats will need to learn from this defeat if they want President Obama to be more than a "great speaker."

[http://www.clarin.com/diario/2010/01/31/elmun do/i-02130498.htm](http://www.clarin.com/diario/2010/01/31/elmun%20do/i-02130498.htm)

¶3. Ana Baron, Clar???n's Washington correspondent, wrote two more opinion articles (1/30 and 1/31) on President Obama's task of negotiating with the Republicans and also with members of his own party. Baron writes that the President is starting off well, by making the economy his top priority and also inviting Republican Congressmen to a policy meeting. Baron also suggests if the Republicans do not start helping pass the President's bills in Congress, President Obama can "start to accuse them of being obstructionists." Yet, the President's larger worry could be Democrats that "abandon the ship in the middle of the storm" and do not vote for the President's bills. According to Baron, this could be "more problematic" than Republican obstructionism, whose party discipline until now has been "exemplary."

[http://www.clarin.com/diario/2010/01/31/elmun do/i-02130496.htm](http://www.clarin.com/diario/2010/01/31/elmun%20do/i-02130496.htm)

¶4. P????gina 12 printed an opinion article (1/31) by Juan Gelman scrutinizing President Obama's lack of discussion of foreign policy topics. Gelman notes that President Obama reiterated his promise to withdraw troops from Iraq by September 2010. However, Gelman points out that President Obama failed to mention that up to 50,000 troops will stay in Iraq indefinitely or that troops being withdraw from Iraq will not go home, but instead be sent to Afghanistan. Gelman also criticized the President for not talking about Afghanistan, as President Obama "barely dedicated 100 words of more than 6,000" in his speech, despite the President sending 30,000 more soldiers. Additionally, Gelman suggests that President Obama is not being tough enough with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu over his decision to continue building controversial settlements. Gelman highlights that while President Obama has ways of "convincing his best friend in the Middle East" to stop building settlements, the President has neither deployed them nor mentioned it in his speech.

http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/cartas/24-1_39331-2010-01-31.html

¶5. Santiago O'Donnell also wrote an opinion article in P????gina 12 (1/31) criticizing President Obama's policy during the past year, which has been between "bad and disastrous." O'Donnell opines that

President Obama's approval levels have fallen below 50%, a level "unthinkable one year ago," because President Obama "wants one thing but the public asks for something else." In addition, President Obama wanted to make history by reforming health care, but Americans only wanted "the end of the month to arrive," along with lower unemployment and an improved economy. O'Donnell noted that it is for these reasons President Obama deserved the defeat in the Massachusetts Senate election.

http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elmundo/4-1_39359-2010-01-31.html

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